GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:415
ANSWERED ON:20.11.2001
MINORITY CELL
RAMDAS ATHAWALE

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Minority Cell has been constituted in his Ministry to look into the complaints of persons belonging to minority communities;

(b) if so, the date on which this cell has been constituted and the details in regard to its composition;

(c) the details of the complaints received in the Cell since its inception and the redressal position thereof; and

(d) the effective steps being taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to make the said Cell more effective ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (I. D. SWAMI)

(a) & (b): A Minority Cell was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs on 21.11.1996 under the charge of one of the Joint Secretaries, with small complement of supporting staff.

(c) to (d): Complaints relating to Law and Order issues concerning minority communities are received from time to time and these are forwarded to the concerned State Governments and Departments of the Central Government for appropriate action.

In the case of heinous crimes towards minority community, the central government also considers to take specific steps, like setting up of Commissions of Inquiry as for instance was done in the case of killing of Mr. Graham Stewart Staines, an Australian national and his two sons on 22nd /23rd January, 1999 in village Manoharpur, District Keonjhar, State Orissa.Appropriate action is taken on the findings of such inquiry reports.

However, since `Public Order` and `Police` are State subjects vide Entry No. 1 and 2 of List-II-State List of the Seventh Schedule o the Constitution of India, it is the primary responsibility of the State Governments to maintain public order and peace, including registration, investigation of crime and compiling of data relating to communal incidents. Thus, redressal of the grievances of the minorities is basically the concern of the State governments and it has been left to the concerned State Government(s).

In order to prevent atrocities on minorities, the Government of India also shares intelligence and sends advisories/alert messages to the States/UTs from time to time and Central Para-Military Forces are made available to them on specific request.A special force called the Rapid Action Force is deployed to deal exclusively with the communal tensions. Assistance is also being provided to State Governments for modernization of their policing infrastructure. In addition, detailed guidelines have been issued in October, 1997 for the promotion of communal harmony.